The Sketch

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WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

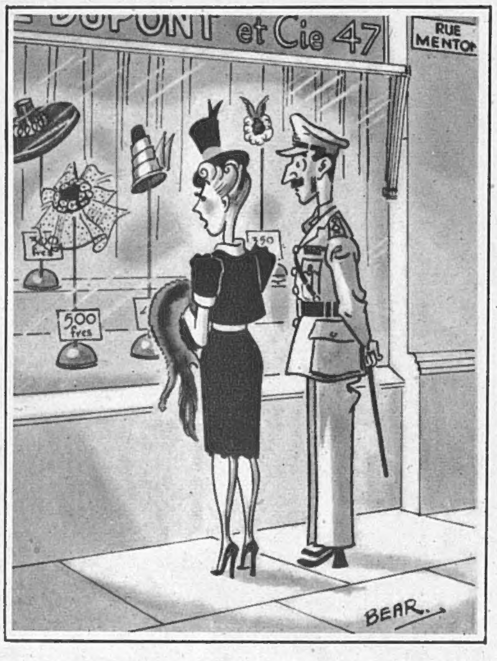
MAJOR RICHARD WAKEFORD, V.C., for being the only V.C. to stroke a boat to Head of the River.

MAJOR RICHARD WAKEFORD, V.C. *(left), stroked the Trinity boat, which remains head of the river, in the Oxford summer eights this year. He was due to go up to Oxford in 1940, but the war intervening, he joined the ranks of the Hampshire Regiment; received his V.C. in an action near Cassino, Italy, 1944. He was wounded in the face, both arms and legs, but continued to lead his men. Major Wakeford is twenty-five. He went up to Oxford this year, and is reading for law.*

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

Stand From Under ! In case it has not occurred to you, and in case you have not seen it stated anywhere, I beg to point out that civilisation is at the cross-roads. One road—and this again you may have seen mentioned—leads to race-suicide, the new Dark Ages, the eclipse of civilisation and other results not cheerful to contemplate. But this is not, as you supposed, because of the atom bomb, because the atom bomb is already a back-number. It is just an innocent little toy, so we are told, compared with the new germ-sprayer announced from America as the latest triumph of science. We have heard a lot about D.D.T. ; the insect world is, I understand, complaining that this great discovery is the eclipse of civilisation for them. Well, in the United States they claim to have discovered a sort of D.D.T. for humanity. You soar into the stratosphere, squirt down a fine spray of malignant microbes, and every growing thing down below will cease to live.



"Fancy asking 500 francs for a thing like that ! . . . By the way, how much is the franc worth ?"

DRAWN BY BEAR.

Forward to Methuselah.

Obviously, the scientists must now set to work to discover the A.A. spray which will wither the germ-planes with still deadlier bacteria. This they will doubtless do, and so perhaps we need not worry unduly. In any case, there are many compensating factors. One of them is said to be that if we "harness" atomic energy properly, we shall not only accelerate the march of Progress with all sorts of miraculous gadgets (until the Good Life becomes simply a vast switchboard), but we can probably lengthen our lives enormously. It would be a great lark, wouldn't it, if we all lived to be about 500, only to be disintegrated by a nuclear bomb or a bacteriological spray ? I can hear some of the more flippant gods on Olympus cackling with laughter over that great human joke. But there you are—you pays your money and you takes your choice : disintegration, probably not of the most painless kind, or the streamlined, chromium-plated life for, say, 500 years. What about it ? It is definitely a cross-roads.

The Old Brigade. Which road will be taken ? Your guess is as good as mine, and we need not waste time on idle, and perhaps rather depressing, speculation. I find it more agreeable, on the whole, to take a glance at the past, and I had a very delightful one, which I shall long treasure, not long ago. In, say, 1941, I should have said that nothing in the universe was more improbable than that I should ever again see Woolley and Hendren put on a hundred for the third wicket. But my old eyes have beheld this, and even if somebody turns the germ-spray on me to-morrow, I can depart in peace. There were grim moments. Sutcliffe and Sandham one apiece—score, two for two ! It looked as if Old England might not only fail, but crumple, and that—whatever the result—was the one thing which nobody wanted to happen. And then, Frank and Patsy—the left and the right and the long and the short of it—I should almost say Beauty and the Beast, but Frank might think it rude ! They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks, but old dogs can sometimes teach young dogs new tricks.

Munching to Glory. It all goes to show that old cricketers never die. (Note also, and note well, that at the Oval and at Lord's, elephants never forget.) As for old soldiers, the reason why they never die has now been revealed. They live on chocolate, said to be a very nourishing substance. Every soldier carries a Field-Marshal's chocolate-cream in his knapsack. Cynics like Mr. Shaw, and that rather bouncing young woman of his, Raina, profess to see something ironical in this. People have even written comic operas about it. They are under the old delusion that soldiers eat nothing but fire, whereas what they need is energy, and chocolate is an energy-producer, which fire is not, as a regular article of diet. Now, when you can combine energy-absorption with a sweet tooth, you have got something. It is therefore right that canteens should sell tons of chocolate, and England's foes would do well to tremble rather than laugh at her chocolate-chewing soldiery, male and female. A remarkable substance is this chocolate. It comes, I believe, from somewhere in the jungle ; but what Western civilisation would do without it I cannot imagine. The Anglo-Saxon nations seem to be divided into two distinct branches ; one munches and the other chews. It is a fair distribution of labour.

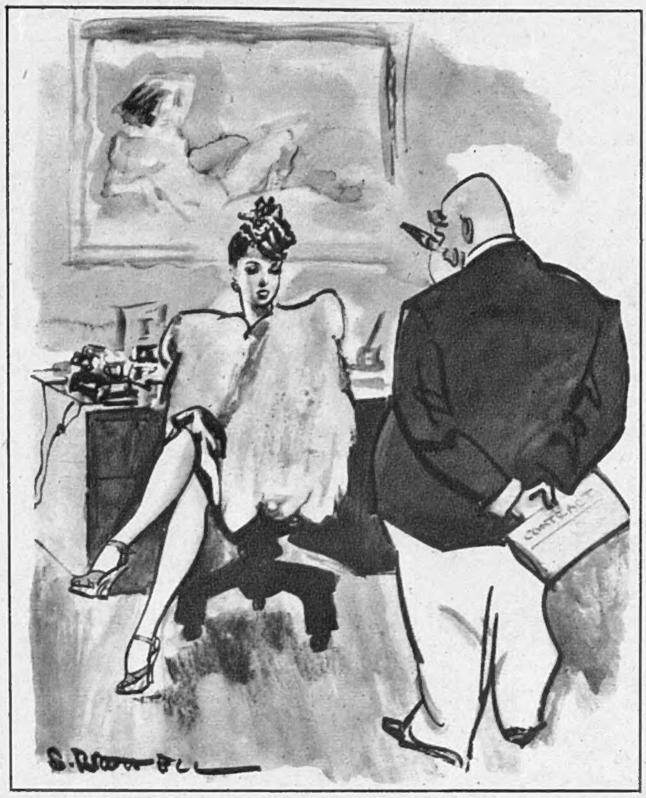
"And to think all this is now Socialist !" [DRAWN BY SILENUS.]

The Dear Departed.

The soldiery are, of course, pampered ;

it is we civilians who feel the pinch of peace. Throughout the hardships of war, it has been my policy to make my life one grand, sweet song. Not a murmur, not a grouse, not a crack! Nobody, for example, has ever seen me throw my nice kipper to the cat, though this, I admit, may be partly due to the fact that there have been few nice kippers to throw. But now, a year after the Cease Fire, I allow myself a small squeak. I miss—ah, how I miss!—the new potatoes. Full many a year they have been the one thing which redeemed the sort of merry month of May which we have been enjoying. You can have the entire crop of strawberries for one dish of *pommes nouvelles persillées*, preferably *au beurre*. But they have gone with the snows of yester-year, assisted by the controls of yesterday. They were selling at seven-and-six; they were controlled to twopence-ha'penny; and now they have vanished!

It Doesn't Add Up. This is one of the mysteries of economics, but it is not by any means the only one. It seems, indeed, that economists have no sooner heaped up an imposing wood-pile than a nigger bobs up in it. Bread, for example. To cut the consumption of bread, says the economist, let us cut the size of the loaf. It is obvious, isn't it?—a simple sum which any child can do. Unfortunately, the answer is wrong. The nigger jumps up grinning from the pile and says, "Look, I'm eating more bread than before!" The sum was wrong because you just can't make these calculations by sums alone—human nature keeps on breaking through. The naughty human factor in this case is that the housewife, looking at the shrunken loaf, says, "I'd better have two," with the result that she buys 50 per cent. more than she bought with the old, unregenerate, large loaf.

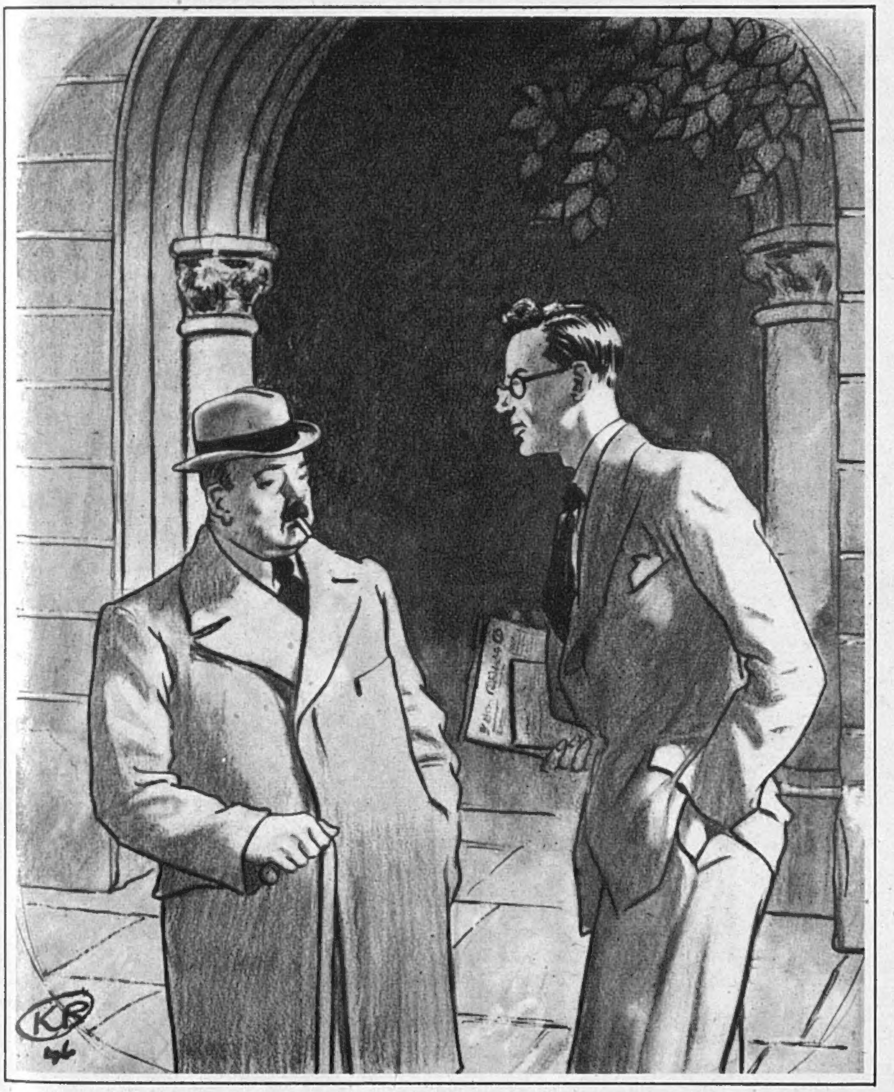


"Remember, Miss Wuxley, ten o'clock bedtime, no smokes, drinks or parties. . . ."
"O.K., my stand-in will attend to all that."

DRAWN BY S. BRETTELL.

Chewing and Eschewing.

And there is another human frailty which I suppose no expert at the Ministry of Food ever thought of. But William Smith, and possibly Mrs. Smith, could have told the experts if they had been asked. Mr. and Mrs. Smith—a large number of them—masticate their food (so far as they masticate it at all) with pearly teeth provided not by God, but by a dentist. Now, this is a delicate subject, but if you happen to be one of the Smiths, you know that crust presents technical difficulties which are practically insuperable. Dentists are ingenious people, but they have not yet solved the problem of the fig-seed, the raspberry-pip, or the crust. Therefore, a smaller loaf, with a proportionately larger superficial area of crust, is simply inciting Mr. and Mrs. Smith to wanton waste; and it is a strenuous, wearing business to try to make Master Smith and Junior Miss Smith love crust as much as they ought to love it. The result is to drive the Smiths to crime, because they are only too apt to throw the crusts to the hens. Moral—economics are no good unless combined with a training in elementary psychology, not to mention dentistry.



Member of the Intelligentzia: "He's one of those *superficial* thinkers . . . the type of mind that *will* maintain that two and two *always* make four."

DRAWN BY BEAUCHAMP.

Rallentando. Psychology—magic word! There is an awful lot of it about, and it is having some very curious results. I notice particularly its effect on the conception of time. We all know that time is relative, but I have a strong impression that for many years past it has been becoming more and more relative. It is an odd contradiction; things are whirling faster and faster about the earth and the atmosphere, like fiery particles, but time itself seems to move more and more slowly. It seemed to me—but this is doubtless the reflection of a "praiser of time past"—that it began to slow down after the Other War and that it is even more *rallentando* after the Second War (which, of course, is only the same war).

The Petty Pace. The established period of gestation for any job of work, even of a minor kind, seems to be four months, which is generally a polite euphemism for six months. Ask for the simplest repair or the most ordinary necessity, from a mainspring to an umbrella cover, and you will be told that it will take "about four months." We became accustomed to that during the war, and we cannot expect miracles within a year, but one had hoped for a little speeding-up by now. I cannot help thinking that the whole tempo of things is permanently affected: the "petty pace" of to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow has become almost a stand-still. If you doubt that, watch the honest labourer at his labour; it is like a slow-motion picture. Or try

[*Continued overleaf.*

The one-hundred-and-forty-third of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of* "*The Sketch*" *is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

a little correspondence with a Government Department, and you will know what Rosalind meant when she chatted (ungrammatically) to Jaques about "who time stands still withal." A shrewd young woman, that; she knew all about the relativity of time long before Einstein. Probably Orlando discovered, when he married her, that time was even more relative than he had imagined, especially when she was on the telephone or dressing to go out.

Kind Words Can Never Die.

But let us count our blessings. There are redeeming features even of peace. How heart-warming it is, for example, to hear a conversation of this kind: "I'm terribly sorry to trouble you, but could you very kindly give me a twopenny ticket to the Bank, and would it be a frightful nuisance to give me change for a shilling?" "It's a pleasure, I assure you, and I do hope you won't mind having the change in coppers?" "Not a bit, not a bit—I *love* coppers, and I think it's awfully sweet of you to give me any change at all. By the way, do you ever go to the pictures in your off-time?" It is these little, nameless, unremembered acts, these spontaneous kind regards, which make life in buses—otherwise rather a stark affair—so much sweeter. The Courtesy Campaign (it is reported) has been so successful that hundreds of passengers are writing to headquarters to commend the old-world courtesy of Clippies; and now the L.P.T.B. is encouraging the staff to send in reports commending any passengers who have shown themselves consistent Chesterfields. I hope a few Good Conduct Prizes will be offered in the shape of free season tickets, or Queue Priorities (in the Russian style). Manners makyth Man, and woman too, even in an omnibus.

"Thanks ever so much, sending up those bones for our dog . . . they made a most *delicious* soup!" [DRAWN BY PITTS.]

Luxury Cruisers.

All done by kindness—that is the principle which we should cultivate in these difficult times. Take the Navy, for example. In the days of Captain Bligh, gentleness and charm of manner do not seem to have been the leading characteristics of naval commanders. By all accounts, the men who won Trafalgar throve on salt junk, rats and weevils and spent most of their spare time being flogged, spread-eagled or keel-hauled. But now I read that the mess-deck of the future is to be a home from home and every ship of the line a floating hotel, with all modern conveniences, from reading-rooms and cinemas to drinking-fountains and ice-cream machines. While the Army gorges on chocolate, the Navy will refresh itself with strawberry and vanilla, and splicing the main brace will doubtless be an extra issue of Eskimo Pie.

And on all very sultry days
Cream ices handed round on trays—

". . . they're rounding Tattenham Corner now . . . Radiotherapy leads . . . Khaled's coming up . . . Edward Tudor's coming up . . . Edward Tudor passes Radiotherapy . . . now Gulf Stream's on to him . . . can he catch Edward Tudor . . . yes, he can . . . he's done it! They're in the dip now . . . it looks like Radiotherapy, Radiotherapy leads. It is . . . it is . . . Radiotherapy . . . ! !"

DRAWN BY STARKE.

"'Ow does it feel? Well, I wouldn't know no difference 'xcept the 'at won't stay on!" [DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.]

Captain Reece, of the "Mantelpiece," was born before his time!

Wonderful World.

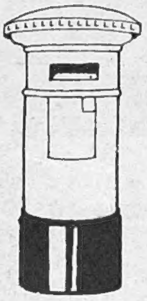
A farmer's wife has been bound over for throwing 80 eggs at her 70-year-old husband. She had evidently borne the yolk too long.—Every park in London is crowded with sleeping unemployed "who have no other place to lay their heads." Moscow says so, but it is misinformed. They are not unemployed; they are just people who can't get rooms in hotels.—Lady de Frece, our one and only Vesta, deplores modern slacks, not because they are slacks, but because so few of our latter-day male impersonators can "wear them successfully." As one who wore them successfully for many years, Vesta ought to know; and unless my eyes deceive me, how right she is!

THE ROYAL FAMILY AT THE DERBY.

The first Derby at Epsom for seven years was run in unpleasant weather unworthy of June, but it was the Derby all right, the greatest national racing festival of the year. THEIR MAJESTIES THE KING AND QUEEN, QUEEN MARY, *and* PRINCESS ELIZABETH *came down by train and are seen arriving on the course.*

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—Lady B. has a cat called William. He is a short-haired grey with yellow eyes, and he is very beautiful, but everybody hates him except Lady B. and me. Lady B. loves him because, as she says, he is the only person she has to talk to in the evenings and he has never actually bitten her; and though I don't go so far as to love him, I certainly don't hate him, for I am fond of cats; their reserve, dignity and grace are a delight to me, and William is more reserved, dignified and graceful than most, and for some peculiar reason he is always nice to Perry, who, with his bulging eyes and rheumatic legs, would be an easy prey for any cat's claws.

In the Spring everybody hates William more than ever, because he catches birds. I don't suppose he catches more birds than other cats do, but he has a disagreeable habit of taking them into the houses of Lady B.'s friends, who ring her up on the telephone or come rushing round to her flat as though, Lady B. says, it were she herself who had been catching birds.

"We sat together in amicable silence."

A few days ago the East Wind stopped blowing and it "came out fine," as they say. It also came out very hot, and I was obliged to face the disagreeable fact that I have no Summer clothes of any sort. However, a blouse with the sleeves rolled up and the collar undone is as cool as most things, so I took a chair and some mending out into the garden and prepared for a happy afternoon. I also took out a chair for Lady B., and it wasn't long before she arrived looking Summery under a tussore sunshade lined with green. "This is the sort of day I dream of all through the Winter," she said, sitting down beside me, with a sigh of contentment. "I 've brought my spectacles, Henrietta, so give me those socks."

One of the nice things about Lady B. is that you don't have to talk to her if you don't want to, and we sat together in amicable silence until Perry gave a low growl, and we looked up to see William stalking majestically across the lawn.

"William!" said Lady B., but William stalked on, tail erect, lifting his grey paws delicately from the grass as though he hadn't heard. It is one of his most irritating habits.

"William!" said Lady B. sharply, and William turned and gave us a long, meaning, malevolent look out of his yellow eyes, and then disappeared into the hedge.

"I 'm afraid he 's after birds," said Lady B., with a sigh. "That cat spoils the Spring for me. I had a dreadful scene with Mrs. Whinebite this morning because he took a starling into their dining-room while they were at breakfast."

"It was horrible for them, of course, but not really your fault."

"Not really William's fault, either, when you come to think of it," said Lady B. "Oh, dear, I do wish the millennium would hurry up and come!"

"And the Lion shall lie down with the Lamb," I said, just to show I knew what she was talking about.

"And the Cat shall lie down with the Mouse," said Lady B. wistfully. "That seems even more wonderful to me. I suppose it 's because I 've never actually had a great deal to do with lions. I often picture dear William with a little mouse playing between his paws, and a chaffinch sitting on his head." I put down my mending and tried to imagine this unlikely tableau. "I think William has a long way to go yet," I said.

"I 'm afraid we all have," said Lady B. "I suppose that is part of our punishment for Sin, that we not only endure suffering, but have to inflict it as well. Wars, for instance."

"Though nobody really wants wars now; except the Japs and the Germans, of course, and I don't suppose they 're as keen on them as they were."

"That," said Lady B. earnestly, "is what makes me feel that perhaps the millennium has begun already. It 's got to start with the humans, and then perhaps it will gradually spread to the animals. I often talk to William about it in the evenings. Not," said Lady B., with a burst of candour, "that I think it has made any impression on him so far."

The front gate burst open and Faith rushed into the garden. "Your beastly cat!" she cried.

"Oh, dear!" said Lady B.

"He 's got one of our young thrushes! Oh, he is a horrible animal! I wish you 'd keep him out of our garden!"

"My dear Faith," said Lady B. calmly, "it 's silly to come in here and be cross with *me* because William has caught a bird."

"'Your beastly cat!'"

"I 'm not blaming you," said Faith, who was.

"If you want to be cross with anybody you must be cross with God," said Lady B. "William is only obeying His laws."

Faith glared at Lady B. "It 's not like you to defend cruelty," she said. "And if anybody says 'Nature red in tooth and claw' to me, I shall scream."

"I 'm not defending cruelty," said Lady B. "I hate it. But it 's sentimental not to face up to the unpleasant laws of nature as well as the pleasant ones."

"Well, the Conductor is going to fire at William with an air-gun if he comes into our garden again. I 'm warning you," said Faith.

"I suppose the Conductor has a right to fire an air-gun in his own garden if he wants to," said Lady B., "though I really can't see how being cruel to William is going to make it any better about William being cruel to birds."

William went on catching birds in Faith's garden and the Conductor fired his air-gun at him. William crawled home very ill and Lady B. nursed him devotedly day and night. The Conductor and Faith were terribly upset about having hit William and came to inquire for him every day, bringing dainty morsels of fish to tempt his failing appetite. Everybody was unhappy.

In the end William recovered, but he had been wounded, and it made him more bad-tempered than ever, though everybody felt there was now some excuse for him.

The awful part of the story is that Faith's gardener took to wringing the necks of all the birds he found in the strawberry nets. He said that now that grey cat didn't come any more there were too many of them in the garden.

Always your affectionate
Childhood's Friend,
HENRIETTA.

"Lady B. nursed him devotedly."

RAINY BUT ROYAL— THE WINDSOR HORSE SHOW.

EVERYTHING at the Royal Windsor Horse Show—a two-day affair for the first time in its history—was brilliant, except the weather, which was gusty, chilly and showery. However, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret went on both days, the King and Queen and the Duchess of Kent and her children came on the second, and there were 720 entries and some 8000 spectators. Prizewinners on the first day received cups and rosettes from the Princesses and from their Majesties on the second, when weather conditions, though not exactly brilliant, were a definite improvement on those of the opening day.

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA OF KENT *and* MISS SYBIL SMITH *competed in the Single Private Driving Turn-Out Class.*

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA OF KENT, THE DUCHESS OF KENT, THE QUEEN *and* THE KING *watching the Show on the second day.*

PRINCESS ELIZABETH, *who, with Princess Margaret, came to the Show on both days, enjoyed a joke with the judges,* COUNTESS FORTESCUE *and the* HON. MRS. BAIRD, O.B.E.

NOMINATION—*the smallest entry in the Show—stepped out with great style and verve, driven by* MISS JEAN BUTLER.

PRINCESS ELIZABETH *sat next to her cousin,* PRINCE MICHAEL OF KENT, *and saw that he did not miss anything interesting.*

STAGE CAMEOS.

HOW much easier for the public if theatre critics, like schoolmasters, could fall back on the impersonal precision of the Greek alphabet! "This week Mr. Freshly scores another γ — — with his 'Adolescent Love,' at the Haywire." Such criticism leaves no room for doubt. A single letter and a double negative effectively cook Mr. Freshly's goose, and tell the public what it wants to know without waste of time. The method might even be improved by the inclusion of a few terse marginal notes addressed by the critic to the dramatist in the tutorial manner. For instance, the following, in the peremptory vein, would only too often be applicable: "I fear you have been cribbing. I, too, have seen Mr. Rattigan's last play"; or "Too short, Mr. Freshly. You know, I expect at least two hours' worth. Read your 'Hamlet'"; or again—and how frequently could this comment be made!—"Cut out the padding!" Of course, there *are* good plays, and from time to time would come the brief commendatory rewards: "Excellent. This will run for a week"; or "Careful and painstaking. They'll never be able to make a film of this"; and so on.

Criticising this fortnight's batch of plays in this scholastic fashion, I should award "GUEST IN THE HOUSE," at the Embassy, a $\beta+$, which is, after all, a very decent mark. It is not quite in the δ class, but then, honestly enough, it hardly claims to be. Emlyn Williams, looking over Messrs. Wilde and Eunson's shoulders, sets out simply to produce an enjoyable evening. He succeeds. Dialogue is fair to middling, acting good (Honours to Betty Ann Davies), and the play has some entertaining twists. The moral would appear to be "Avoid charity like the plague, and, if you have a female invalid relative, don't give her your address."

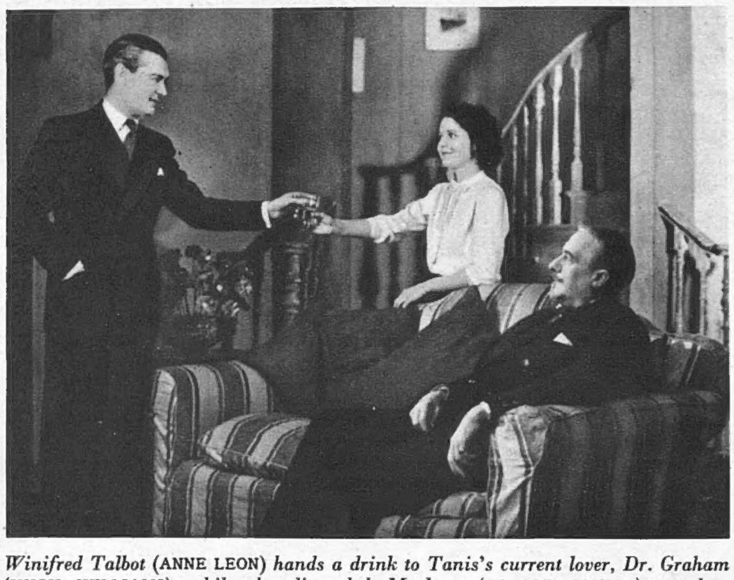
As Tanis Talbot in "Portrait in Black" (Piccadilly Theatre), DIANA WYNYARD *has the dashing part of a woman who doesn't stop at murder if she wants anything.*

Terence Rattigan, whose new play "THE WINSLOW BOY" has come on at the Lyric, is, of course, one of the bright lights of the Sixth Form (Drama Section). He has never had a γ, and it would be unheard of for him to be kept in on a half-holiday. He is, in fact, an inveterate prize-winner, one of the scholarship boys. These, as every schoolmaster knows, are not the geniuses of later life (geniuses are invariably sacked for idleness or worse). However, the scholarship boys are important in their way, and are perhaps a justification for the commercial theatre. The schoolmaster-critic must therefore grasp his blue pencil very firmly and keep his facts and figures well in mind when he approaches a play such as "The Winslow Boy." What mark, in fact, should we give it? I think, as West End plays go to-day, it is certainly worth a δ. Rattigan's play has moments of fine dramatic intensity, though it is difficult to estimate how much it owes to excellent acting (Honours to Frank Cellier and Emlyn Williams). It has also, though this one has a right to expect from the Sixth Form, extreme fluency and there are no "howlers." (A β dramatist would, of course, have fallen into the trap in the last act and done the obvious, leaving Angela Baddeley, where most of the audience hoped to see her, in Emlyn Williams' arms.) Not least, "The Winslow Boy" is a first-class example of how to write really effective propaganda. Though set in the pre-1914 world, it deals with one of the most immediate and frightening of contemporary problems—the preservation of the rights of the individual citizen in the face of a vast bureaucratic machine—and does so with such tact as to be completely convincing.

Before Miss Diana Wynyard—not to speak of her ravishing frocks—the Greek alphabet is powerless. To maintain a scholastic objectivity when confronted with the provocative and deadly heroine of "PORTRAIT IN BLACK" would be neither male nor human. She is hopelessly alluring—and quite poisonous, as her unfortunate lovers find out to their mortal cost. To tell the story of her grim passion would be to wreck the play, which depends, like any good thriller, on suspense. "Portrait in Black" keeps a mystified audience at the Piccadilly guessing for two good hours. The construction is clever, and each "curtain" gives a new turn to the complications of a most unhallowed love. It is perhaps to the credit of the play, rather than the reverse, that the wild improbability of the whole thing—both psychologically and circumstantially—only strikes you as the lights finally go up and you struggle out of your seat.

It is a far call from the deadly Lady in Black to the "gay 'nineties" at the Adelphi. "CAN-CAN" is pure nonsense in the "Merry Widow" tradition, and no more overburdened with wit or imagination than such things usually are. It will, however, be welcome—in spite of a lamentably limp ballet in the second act—to those with an amiable weakness for the black silk stockings that so tormented our grandfathers, or the readiness to find a simple, vicarious pleasure, in 1946, at seeing people drink quantities of champagne (*ersatz*, alas, one supposes) at frequent intervals. The story—as is only proper in a light operette set to Offenbach and the popping of champagne corks—is no matter at all. The important thing is that it takes you to the Bal Tabarin in the company of Clifford Mollison disguised as a Russian prince. There are naturally infinite sentimental complications, a ballet dancer with a heart of gold, a noble duke, and, of course, a funny man—though, unless my ear for the *double entente* is growing less sensitive, Leo Franklyn's quips are not as "Gallic" as they used to be in pre-war days. This, anyway, is the only trace of austerity.

Burlesque is the strong point of the R.A.F.'s "GANG SHOW" at the Stoll. There is an excellent take-off of a classical ballet which budding choreographers would do well to study, and an entertaining version of a musical comedy of the "'twenties" in the same farcical vein. R. F.



Winifred Talbot (ANNE LEON) *hands a drink to Tanis's current lover, Dr. Graham* (HUGH WILLIAMS), *while the discarded Marlowe* (RONALD SQUIRE) *watches.*

Anonymous letters cause the death of Lover No. 1, Rupert Marlowe. Philip Graham shoots him.

PLAYS YOU MUST SEE: "PRIVATE LIVES" (Fortune). "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" (Globe). "THE FIRST GENTLEMAN" (Savoy). "UNDER THE COUNTER" (Phœnix). SADLER'S WELLS BALLET SEASON (Covent Garden). "SWEETEST AND LOWEST" (Ambassadors).

PLAYS WELL WORTH SEEING: "HIGH TIME" (Palladium). "LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN" (Haymarket). "PERCHANCE TO DREAM" (Hippodrome). "THE NIGHT AND THE MUSIC" (Coliseum). "THE HASTY HEART" (Aldwych). "NO MEDALS" (Vaudeville). "LADY FROM EDINBURGH" (Playhouse). "THE SHOP AT SLY CORNER" (St. Martin's). "IS YOUR HONEYMOON REALLY NECESSARY?" (Duke of York's). "FOLLOW THE GIRLS" (His Majesty's). "MERRIE ENGLAND" (Princes). "FINE FEATHERS" (Prince of Wales). OPERA SEASON (Sadler's Wells). "WORM'S EYE VIEW" (Whitehall). "THE GUINEA-PIG" (Criterion). "SONG OF NORWAY" (Palace). "FIFTY-FIFTY" (Strand). "MAKE IT A DATE" (Duchess). "BETTER LATE" (Garrick). "HERE COME THE BOYS" (Saville). "NO ROOM AT THE INN" (Winter Garden). "FRIEDA" (Westminster). "CAN-CAN" (Adelphi). "GANG SHOW" (Stoll). "THE KINGMAKER" (St. James's). "THE WINSLOW BOY" (Lyric). "RED ROSES FOR ME" (New).

While every endeavour is made to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

IN "THE YEARS BETWEEN," Daphne du Maurier wrote for the stage something that was rather a situation for a play than a play in itself, and it was clear that any film producer who took the work over for presentation on the screen would have to fit the sketchy framework with a good deal of upholstery. Miss du Maurier's hero is a soldier M.P. who is reported killed on active service. His wife, pulling herself together after the first shock of the news, takes his seat in the House of Commons, and reorganises and runs his country home under the revised conditions of war. She becomes a woman of responsibility and character, and in time she falls deeply in love again. Her new love is an old friend, a neighbouring farmer, the good, solid British gentleman type. The wedding day is fixed, the honeymoon bags are packed, when all of a sudden the first husband turns up from a German prison camp, a little bit battered, but otherwise his old, virile, sentimental self, all ready to take up the threads of life where they left off. This is the situation for which Miss du Maurier plainly arranged the play. The world has changed, but the husband hasn't. What will he do? What will the wife do? What will the farmer do? The author's answer was less of a solution than a compromise, but in an age in which compromise is common currency it served pretty well.

"The Years Between" was a slight piece on the stage, confined to a single set, and played by a small cast. The screen-play writers, as might have been anticipated, have brought in all sorts of extra characters, widened the scene and spread out the plot in all directions. In the film at the Leicester Square we see the M.P.'s happy home life before the war; we see the memorial service when the news of his death comes through; we see the wife's collapse, and hear her, in an impossible and embarrassing scene, talking to her husband's empty chair; we watch her recovery and the growth of her political interests; we see her taking her seat in the House and hear her maiden speech; we accompany her to restaurants and political meetings, into the blitz, through the local hayfields, in the village taxi, to Whitehall on VE-Day. The film does not confine itself, as the play did, to the emotional drama of the three principal characters, but touches lightly and perfunctorily on the problem of re-orientation as it affects various types of people; the mechanic in the garage as well as the secretary at the desk. The result is a curious dispersal of interest.

The performances inevitably suffer from the weakening of their parts. Valerie Hobson, as the busy wife, is kept so constantly on the run between incident and incident that she has little time to work up a character of her own. The two men, Michael Redgrave as the husband and James McKechnie as the honest farmer, are in even worse case. From the way their rôles are written here, it is almost impossible to discern the qualities in either that might make an intelligent woman love him; the husband is displayed as fretful, boorish and egocentric, the lover as a stuffy prig and bore. Probably in the end the player who comes out best from "The Years Between" is Flora Robson, as the devoted family Nannie. Miss Robson hasn't much to do in the film, but she does it with tact and discretion; she knows a Nannie's place, and the place is high.

"The Strange Love of Martha Ivers" (première, Carlton, June 13) throws the shadow of murder over four lives. Above: Toni (LIZABETH SCOTT) *shows Sam* (VAN HEFLIN) *her sun-suit, when Martha* (BARBARA STANWYCK) *enters, and insults Toni.*

"FROM THIS DAY FORWARD" (New Gallery) should be all about love. Heaven knows it is not about anything else. If the producers try to kid me it is about unemployment, I refer them to their script. A discharged American soldier goes to an employment bureau and begins to fill up forms. While filling up forms in a perfectly reasonable way, he is distracted by a demon voice off-screen which tells him what sort of forms he *ought* to fill up. "They don't ask you, soldier," whispers the Demon Voice, "are you scared? Do you love your wife? Do you want a kid?" Why in the world should they? That would be an interference with the liberty of the subject, and no mistake. After considering, in flashback, for eighty minutes or thereabouts, whether he is scared, how much he loves his wife and if he wants a kid, the soldier simply moves on to the next desk and gets the promise of a job, beginning bang off as a foreman.

No, "From This Day Forward" may play about with random symbols of unemployment, but it is chiefly concerned with love. It is an account, in the style of "Under the Clock" and "The Crowd," of the meeting and first married days of two young working people. The background is the meaner streets of New York; the big players are none of them dressy types. As played by Joan Fontaine and a new young man called Mark Stevens, it has a breathless kind of friendliness and one or two moments of rather tricksy charm. It is directed with a marked concentration on the everyday details of life, and it is not, on the whole, an unsympathetic film. But it is far too calculated and cute, you feel, to enter into the simpler aspects of love. Only a Juliet can afford to say, "I have forgot why I did call thee back." Miss Fontaine, dear delightful puss, with her starry eyes and shining shampooed hair, never forgets *anything*.

"The Dark Corner" (Gaumont, Haymarket) is a screenful of crime; of crosses and double-crosses; clues and counter-clues; murder and sudden death. Here Mari (unseen) shoots her husband, Cathcart (CLIFTON WEBB), *just as he levels his gun at Bradford Galt* (MARK STEVENS), *detective; leaves the coast clear to Brad and Kathleen* (LUCILLE BALL) *for a honeymoon.*

DANIELLE DARRIEUX *stars in "Premier Rendezvous," at the Carlton. As Micheline, lovely friendless orphan, she answers a "lonely gentleman" advertisement, meets elderly Nicolas* (FERNAND LEDOUX), *who pretends her correspondence was with his nephew, Pierre* (LOUIS JOURDAN). *The dénouement, temporarily frustrated by orphanage officials, is romantic.*

"From This Day Forward" (New Gallery). Bill Cummings (MARK STEVENS) *is to be demobilised. His wife, Susan* (JOAN FONTAINE), *is going to have a baby. As Bill sits filling in the form for a job, his mind casts back. We see his in-laws and their shiftless ways; their warning that marriage is dreary, monotonous, poverty-stricken. But Susan and Bill feel that love conquers all.*

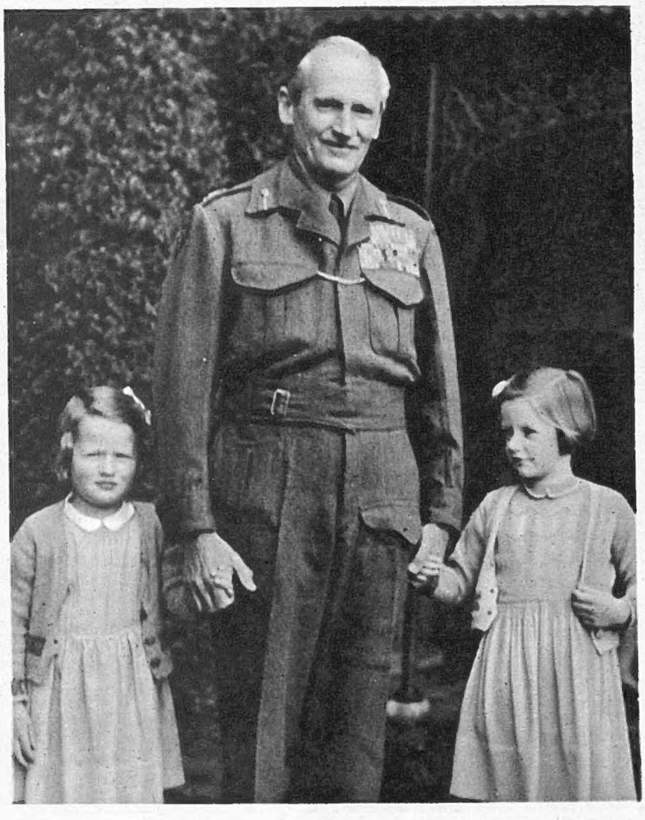
Mark Stevens ("He 's different . . . and Dangerous! He 's STEVENS . . . and Sensational!" as Synopsis so beautifully puts it) turns up for the second time this week in a thriller called "THE DARK CORNER" (Gaumont and Marble Arch Pavilion). This time Mr. Stevens plays one of those parts customarily associated with Alan Ladd and Dick Powell—the sort of hero who is inevitably framed by crooks, trailed by cops, loved by battling blondes, and generally man-handled by the entire cast in an atmosphere of quick shooting and low lighting. As a fairly savage mystery story, with an alert technician always on the job waiting to pick up a conventional scene with an unconventional camera angle, "The Dark Corner" rates a goodish *alpha*. As well as the muscular Mr. Stevens, William Bendix is in and out of the plot, mauling and being mauled, and admirers of "Laura" will be delighted to find Clifton Webb back again in another of his choice sketches of cultured villainy.

"MEET THE NAVY" (Empire) is a British film version of the Royal Canadian Navy Show, which came to the Hippodrome towards the end of the war. If you enjoy watching a hearty amateur frolic, this one won't hurt you. It is well-drilled and well-meaning; has a fair comedian and magnificent bass; offers a couple of dozen numbers and a varied floor-show; and the general note of vigour and good comradeship should make up for lack of plot, direction, polish and various other qualities I could mention.

GOING PLACES AND SEEING PEOPLE BY CAMERA:

MAJOR THE HON. MORYS BRUCE, *Welsh Guards, elder son of Lord and Lady Aberdare, married* MISS SARAH DASHWOOD, *only daughter of Sir John and Lady Dashwood, of West Wycombe Park, Bucks, at the Church of St. Lawrence, West Wycombe.*

H.R.H. PRINCESS ELIZABETH *attended a dance at the Old House Hotel, Windsor, in aid of the N.S.P.C.C. She is dancing with* CAPTAIN JOSHUA RAYLEY, *Grenadier Guards.*



F.-M. LORD MONTGOMERY *with* ELIZABETH *and* JEAN DES VOEUX *after he had unveiled memorials at Burghclere Church to their grandfather, Lt.-Col. J. F. E. Elkington, D.S.O., father, Sir Richard des Voeux, Bt., and uncle, Capt. R. F. R. Elkington.*

When PAULETTE GODDARD *is in Paris she does as the Parisiennes do and push-bikes around on account of the transport troubles. She contrives to look as glamorous on her machine as she does on the screen.*

PICTURE BOOK OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS AND EVENTS.

THE FOURTH OF JUNE *festivities at Eton were held on the real day, June 4, but the weather was not kind and austerity " bring-your-own-food " conditions were in force. The bomb damage to the Upper School could be observed during Absence in School Yard.*

T .H. PRINCESS ELIZABETH *and* PRINCESS MARGARET *were present at Eton for the Fourth of June celebrations. Here they are on arrival.*

MRS. T. LILLEY, *wife of the owner of Radiotherapy (Hyperion—Belleva), which came in third in the Derby, wore this striking hat at Epsom on the Tuesday.*

THE HON. ROSEMARY NEST SCOTT-ELLIS, *youngest daughter of Lord and Lady Howard de Walden, married* MR. GEORGE FITZROY SEYMOUR, *younger son of Mr. FitzRoy and Lady Victoria Seymour, at St. Margaret's.*

MR. J. E. FERGUSON'S AIRBORNE *(grey colt by Precipitation—Bouquet) won the first post-war Epsom Derby by a length, with* T. LOWREY *up, starting at 50 to 1.*

AT QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S "GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE" BALL.

THE HON. PETER STRUTT, MISS MARYGOLD CONGREVE, SUB-LIEUT. J. R. GREEN, R.N., *and* MISS PATRICIA THOMAS *are the quartet round this supper-table.*

LORD FOLEY, *the eighth baron, who succeeded to the title in 1927, when he was four years old, dancing with* MISS PAT SPENCER-CHAPMAN.

MISS DIANA CROSS, *second daughter of Sir Ronald and Lady Cross, dancing with* MR. PAUL METHUEN. *She is a débutante of the year.*

MISS RUTH WALKER, CAPTAIN GORDON ANTONY, MRS. ANTONY, MR. JOHN WILLIAMS, FLIGHT-LIEUT. J. H. CORDLE, LADY CRAVEN *and* SURG.-LIEUT. D. G. THOMSON *are left to right round this table.*

QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S birthday balls are popular events in the débutantes' calendar, but this year, in addition to these anniversary festivities in aid of the hospital, a "Glorious 1st of June" ball was also organised and proved as successful as the other Queen Charlotte's dances. It was held at Grosvenor House and attended by many of the débutantes of the first post-war season. Full evening dress was worn by all the girls, and though some of their partners were in uniform and a few black ties could be observed, the white tie and tails contingent were the most numerous. The Hon. Peter Strutt is the second son of Lord Belper, Miss Marygold Congreve is the second daughter of the late Commander Sir Geoffrey Congreve, D.S.O., R.N., first and last baronet, and the Countess of Craven is the wife of the sixth Earl of Craven.

MISS PRUDENCE TALLENTS, *who wore an attractive lace dress and spray of real flowers, at supper with* MR. BLATCHLEY.

PRINCESS DANUSH OF ALBANIA, CAPTAIN PHILIP BRIANT *and* THE HON. GLORIA CURZON, *daughter of Lord Scarsdale.*

THE NEW BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S.

LORD INVERCHAPEL, *the new British Ambassador to the United States, arrived in Washington last week. He travelled alone by train from New York and was met at the station by Embassy officials and a State department representative. Formerly Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, G.C.M.G., Lord Inverchapel is one of our most distinguished diplomats, with a record of forty years' service, only broken when in the 1914-18 war he enlisted in the Scots Guards. His first Ambassadorial post was in 1935 in Baghdad. He went to China in 1938, and in 1942 was transferred to Moscow. Last January he was created a baron and it was announced that he would succeed Lord Halifax (who had asked permission to resign) as Ambassador to the United States, after he had fulfilled his special mission to Java to advise the Dutch on the Indonesian question.* [PORTRAIT BY KARSH, OF OTTAWA.]

JENNIFER GIBBS, *daughter of the bride by her first marriage, attended the reception, and caused considerable amusement to chief bridesmaid,* H.R.H. PRINCESS ELIZABETH *and* PRINCE PHILIP OF GREECE *(r.).* *The* KING OF THE HELLENES *is on the left.*

The HON. ANDREW C. V. ELPHINSTONE, *younger son of Lord and Lady Elphinstone, and the* HON. MRS. ELPHINSTONE, *formerly the Hon. Mrs. Vicary Gibbs, leaving St. Margaret's, after their wedding.*

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, *aunt of the bridegroom, was entirely dressed in her favourite shade of pale blue. Her swathed hat of tulle with softly falling drapery at one side, was spangled with pearls. She and the King attended the church and the reception.*

When the HON. MRS. ANDREW ELPHINSTONE *left the reception for her wedding trip,* HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN *blew an affectionate kiss to her new niece-by-marriage.*

PRINCESS ELIZABETH A BRIDES
THE ROYAL FAMILY AT THE MA

THE KING and QUEEN, QUEEN MARY and PRINCESS MARGARET all attended the marriage of her Majesty's nephew, the Hon. Andrew Elphinstone, younger son of Lord and Lady Elphinstone, to the Hon. Mrs. Vicary Gibbs, daughter of Captain Angus Valdimar Hambro, and since 1945 Extra Lady-in-Waiting to H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth, who acted as chief bridesmaid. The bride wore a dress of gold-and-white brocade—the material for which was brought from India by the bridegroom—and a

N.B. A Coloured p

The BRIDE dropped a graceful curtsey to THE KING OF THE HELLENES as she and the BRIDEGROOM received his congratulations at the reception after their wedding.

HIS MAJESTY THE KING came to the church and also to the reception, and is here seen in conversation with bridesmaid the HON. MARGARET ELPHINSTONE, sister of the bridegroom.

H.R.H. PRINCESS MARGARET with a gift for the BRIDE. The group also includes THE KING, PRINCESS ELIZABETH, QUEEN MARY, THE QUEEN, and the BRIDEGROOM.

ID TO HER LADY-IN-WAITING: AGE OF THE QUEEN'S NEPHEW.

head-dress of white flowers. Her child bridesmaids wore cream tulle over satin and had head-dresses and bouquets of white and flame-coloured flowers. The bridegroom's gifts to the bridesmaids were leaf-shaped diamond brooches. After the ceremony at St. Margaret's, Westminster, a reception was held at the Savoy Hotel, which was honoured by the presence of the Royal Family, and of the King of the Hellenes, and Prince Philip of Greece.

inserted in this issue.

PRINCESS ELIZABETH was chief bridesmaid to her Lady-in-Waiting, the Hon. Mrs. Vicary Gibbs, now the Hon. Mrs. Andrew Elphinstone. H.R.H. wore a dress of deep cream moss crêpe and a floral head-dress in shades of flame and gold.

LORD ALEXANDER'S NEW HOME—RIDEAU HALL, OTTAWA.

RIDEAU HALL, official residence of the Governor-General of Canada, was built in 1840 by the Hon. Thomas Mackay for his own use. Twenty-five years later it was leased to the Canadian Government, who bought it in 1868. The new Governor-General, H.E. LORD ALEXANDER, and LADY ALEXANDER on their arrival recently began at once to put their impress on the interior of this fine house, which contains between fifty and sixty rooms. Rideau Hall takes its name from the Rideau Canal which runs close by.

Rideau Hall is built of brick with a stucco finish; is surrounded by lovely gardens and grounds of over eighty acres.

The spacious main corridor leads towards the entrance to the salon and the ballroom. A portrait of King Edward VII. hangs on the left.

H.E. LADY ALEXANDER *looks at one of her husband's paintings, newly hung. At thirty-seven her Excellency is one of the youngest châtelaines Rideau Hall has ever known.*

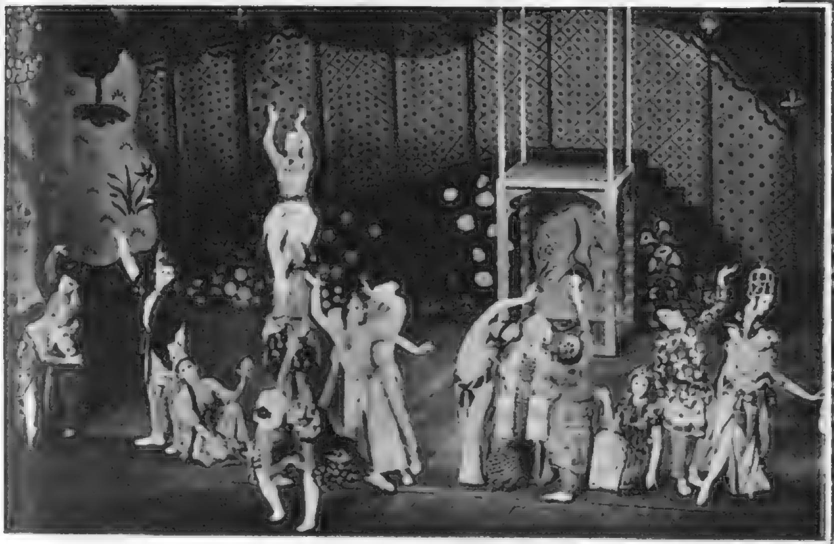
The ballroom is often used for the showing of films to the Governor-General's guests. Portraits of King George V. and Queen Mary are seen on the wall at the end.

Flights of wild geese and duck pass up the Ottawa Valley; so there will be plenty of sport for H.E. LORD ALEXANDER *when the fall comes.*

NEW BALLET WHICH TELLS NO STORY: "KHADRA."

SHEILA O'REILLY *as Khadra dances finely in the scarlet-lacquered Persian pavilion.*

(L. to r.) DIANA FIELD *and* DONALD BRITTON; AUDREY HARMAN *and* MICHAEL HOGAN *demonstrate the bent-knee convention introduced by Celia Franca, the choreographer, with great effect.*



A general view of the company with its background of the gorgeous pavilion, with gold-leaf sky, stylised flowering shrubs, in the manner of a Persian carpet.

A close-up of the group, which is built up into the form of a tower.

ANNE HEARN *and* LEO KERSLEY *as The Beloved and The Lover dance in Oriental postures, use their hands in the Eastern tradition.*

"KHADRA," at the Sadler's Wells theatre, is a new ballet presented by the Sadler's Wells Opera-Ballet, with Sheila O'Reilly in the name-part. The ballet has no story, but shows Khadra the young girl watching the life round her; the lovers whose solitude is disturbed; the dancers who draw her into their midst. Night falls and Khadra departs. "Khadra" is danced to the music of Sibelius' "Belshazzar's Feast" in a wonderful setting designed by Honor Frost, recalling the carpets of Ispahan.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROGER WOOD, A.R.P.S.

" Mine was incredibly handsome, Mine was superbly athletic, Mine was attracted when I said I acted—Mine wasn't even magnetic ! " MONICA MALLORY, OLIVE WRIGHT, PAM TREVERS *and* HERMIONE GINGOLD *(l. to r.) in* " SEA SHANTY."

" You haven't got the push ? " " It's the push all right, Grable. ' Complete lack of initiative.' I'll keep that as a souvenir." HENRY KENDALL *as the ex-bomber pilot and* GRETCHEN FRANKLIN *as the typist in* " INITIATIVE "— *a serious sketch.*

"SWEETEST AND LOWEST" is the third edition of the famous Ambassadors Theatre revue with HERMIONE GINGOLD and HENRY KENDALL which began in 1943 as "Sweet and Low," continued in 1944 and 1945 as "Sweeter and Lower," and now reaches the superlative. The Gingold has never had better numbers and has never put them over with more deadly accuracy and point. In our last issue we gave a full-page photograph of Miss Gingold in "Self-Portrait," as the perfect model for Picasso, and on these pages she is seen with Mr. Henry Kendall and members of the company in other numbers from this brilliant show.

" This is the Age of Progress, And Progress is such fun Eighteen - Fifty - One." EDNA WOOD *and* GRETCHEN ... *Farjeon, with mus*

" In spite of all the contracts that were showered, Mr. Coward, Resolutely turned his back on past successes, And continued, in Viceregal homes and messes, In his policy of doing good by stealth." HERMIONE GINGOLD *singing* " Noel, Noel."

" We could pay off that loan with the money we earn, In spite of the comments of C. A. Lejeune " : CHRISTOPHER HEWETT *as Stewart Granger,* OLIVE WRIGHT *as Phyllis Calvert,* HERMIONE GINGOLD *as Margaret Lockwood, and* RICHARD CURNOCK *as James Mason in* " FILM FOURSOME."

THE THIRD EDITION OF THE GREAT GINGOLD SMASH-HIT

...hy does a cow go Moo-Moo-Moo And a pussy-cat Miaow-Miaow-Miaow?" ...RY KENDALL as the Duchess and GEORGE CARDEN as the U.S. Marine in "PANTOMIME—RETURN VISIT."

"It's gonna be a White Wedding on the Black Market, With nothing controlled by the State; If the whisky runs dry we've a source of supply—An Armenian Jew out at Notting Hill Gate!" EDNA WOOD with BARBARA BARRIE, MONICA MALLORY, JULIE STAFFORD and PAM TREVERS.

...s good to be grown-up like me, In ...AN...LIN sing "1851," a lyric by Herbert ...Charles Zwar.

ALAN MELVILLE has written practically the whole of "Sweetest and Lowest." He has had a rapid rise to fame and fortune by his wit and superbly cheeky pen. Educated at the Edinburgh Academy he became an apprentice joiner, but wrote in his spare time and sold a detective story. When serving in the R.A.F. he sold a sketch or two to the original "Sweet and Low" and he is now "right there" in the forefront as author of the most successful revue imaginable. Alan Melville, whose real name is Alan Melville Caverhill, is thirty-five years of age, a tall, apparently grave Lowland Scot.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEXANDER BENDER.

...I followed much too far In the footsteps of Papa, I'm the youngest Old ...onian this morning." HERMIONE GINGOLD as the Son of Young Woodley in "HEREDITY."

"What's he like? Beelzebub, I mean." "Oh, tall and dark, quite good-looking. He sang in 'Faust' for a long time." HENRY KENDALL and HERMIONE GINGOLD in "ABSOLUTE HELL."

"SWEETEST AND LOWEST" BARBED WIT AND BRILLIANT SATIRE.

ALAN LUND, *choreographer; a solo dancer in the Coney Island sequence, does a brilliant dance at lightning speed racing all over the stage properties.*

MARGARET HURST *plays Midge the heroine who meets her boy-friend Johnny during rehearsals for a camp show.*

LIONEL MURTON *a product of Montreal Repertory Theatre is Johnny, pianist, anxious to return to sea duty, but forced through events to play in a camp show.*

MEET SOME TOPS OF "MEET THE NAVY."

"MEET THE NAVY" musical, at the Empire during Victory Week, is the show put on by the Royal Canadian Navy at the Hippodrome filmed, with a story added. The last third of the film is in Technicolor, and shows the Hippodrome performance, with the King, Queen and Princesses attending. A sparkling feature of this film is the Russian peasant festival, enriched by the magnificent voice of the Singing Fisherman, Oscar Naske, a New Zealander.

PORTRAITS BY GRANT MACDONALD, R.C.N.V.R.

JOHN PRATT *(of Montreal Repertory) the comic lugubrious Horace, who sings "You'll Get Used To It."*

BILLIE MAE RICHARDS *is Alan Lund's attractive co-dancer in the "Coney Island" sequence.*

BILL O'CONNOR *brought the show together; was a sports and entertainment officer in the Navy.*

BLACK-HEARTED, BEAUTIFUL "BEDELIA."

Charlie Carrington (IAN HUNTER) disturbed by the discovery that his wife Bedelia (MARGARET LOCKWOOD) has lied to him, and that the black pearl is still in her possession.

Charlie Carrington admires the picture supposedly by Burgess, Bedelia's late husband, which Ben (BARRY K. BARNES) has given her. Bedelia does not register enthusiasm—for Burgess never existed!

Charlie discovers that his beautiful, if rather mysterious, young wife, has been trying to poison food intended for Ben—and wrests the fatal phial from her.

"BEDELIA," the screen play of the best-seller murder thriller, is a John Corfield production due at the Plaza on June 7. The story introduces Charlie Carrington and his bride on honeymoon at Monte Carlo, where they meet Ben Chaney, an artist who is interested by Bedelia and also by a black pearl which she possesses. Bedelia says that her late husband was an artist called Burgess, but appears puzzled and upset when Ben gives her a picture purporting to be painted by Burgess. The plot unfolds dramatically till the mystery about Bedelia is pierced by Ben—really a detective—and the black-hearted young woman is hoist with her own petard.

The game is up and Bedelia knows it! The beautiful murderess realises that the only way out for her is to take the poison which she has so freely administered to others.

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

"THEN AND NOW" is an historical novel based on an incident in the life of Niccolo Machiavelli, for centuries so notorious as the author of "The Prince," and the admirer of Cæsar Borgia, that his name has almost become a synonym for the Devil. Mr. Somerset Maugham, however, divests him of diabolical attributes and presents him as a typical figure of the Italian Renaissance, a patriot according to his lights, a professed cynic, a wily and treacherous politician of the kind which is as common now as it was then; a man of average morals but of more than average abilities. "*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*" is the motto of the book.

In 1502 Machiavelli was sent by the Signory of Florence on a mission to Cæsar Borgia, then in the midst of his four years of power. The political situation in Italy was so involved that it challenges even Mr. Maugham's great powers of elucidation; once or twice, indeed, by a reckless multiplication of proper names, he makes it even more involved than it need be. Cæsar was bent on carving out for himself a kingdom in Central Italy. He had made the Romagna his own; one by one he was subduing the great families in their cities; his energy was unquenchable, and who knew where his ambition would stop? Florence might be next on the list. The only power capable of checking this warlike son of Pope Alexander VI. was France; and with the influence of France Niccolo, in his negotiations with Cæsar Borgia, made discreet play; but France was a double-edged weapon, since Louis XII. already had an understanding with the Pope.

The Weak Spot. Machiavelli was a brave man and a resourceful diplomat, though handicapped by a bad digestion. He acquitted himself well in his perilous conversations with "Il Valentino." But Mr. Maugham, though too responsible a writer to treat history perfunctorily, is less interested in what happens in the council room than in what happens in the heart. Machiavelli had a weak spot there; he had fallen in love with the wife of his friend Bartolomeo, and was determined to possess her. He pressed presents upon her; he called in the aid of her mother, of a priest, and rather rashly, of his own aide-de-camp, the handsome Piero; and he hatched a plot for getting the irksome husband out of the way which, by its ingenuity, would have done credit to Boccaccio. But he over-reached himself; his own cynicism led him astray, and at the end he found to his acute mortification—the mortification any Italian feels at having been outwitted in love—that he was the dupe of his own dupes.

Love, Art and Freedom. "If you are as sharp as that, you 'll cut yourself." This old nursery maxim embodies one of the lessons to be learnt from "Then and Now." Also, that love makes a fool of the wisest man. Machiavelli knew that "women appreciated neither irony nor sarcasm, but simple jokes and funny stories. He was amply provided with both"—but they did not avail him against a handsomer and younger rival. Machiavelli, however, was not easily cast down. The experience gave him the idea for his play, "The Mandrake." "What is love beside art!" he exclaimed. A few hours later, catching sight of Florence and the famous dome that Mr. Maugham mistakenly attributes to Bramante (the only error in local colour I could detect), he weeps for his beloved city, now, thanks to the corruption of its rulers, lying at the mercy of any conqueror who comes along; and, "To hell with art," he said. "What is art beside freedom! Men who lose their freedom lose everything."

Love, art, freedom. . . . Mr. Maugham does not commit himself as to which of those standards of value he puts first. Gone—or at any rate imperceptible—is his mystical mood of "The Razor's Edge"; perhaps with a slight weariness he embraces his old cynicism. "Since no one in Italy was such a fool as to trust anyone else farther than he could see, and a safe conduct was worth no more than the paper it was written on. . . ." His book does not so much rebuke the wickedness of "then" and "now" as rebuke the folly of idealists who believe that human nature can be changed. An old, sad conclusion; some would say a trite and shallow one. Mr. Maugham's mastery of technique, his triumphant readability, his cult of the intelligible and the lucid, sometimes, very unfairly, make his view of human nature seem less profound than it is. To call it superficial is easy enough; but what faith is needed to say it is untrue!

VICTORIA SACKVILLE-WEST'S *newest book of verse, "The Garden," lately published by Michael Joseph, divided into the four seasons, combines the practical knowledge of the gardener with the imaginative interpretation of the poet. In 1927 Miss Sackville-West was awarded the Hawthornden Prize for her long poem "The Land." She is the wife of the Hon. Harold Nicolson, author and critic, and lives at Sissinghurst Castle, Kent.*

A Farm in New Zealand. David Holt pays £500 for a farm in New Zealand that he has never seen, and with £200 in his pocket sets out from England. The year is 1933; David is twenty-one, and so ignorant of his job that he imagines a pullet to be some special breed of hen; but his hopes are high. Alas, they are soon to be dashed. Work as he will, he can no more make a success of his holding at Moananui than could his predecessors; and presently he finds himself reduced to the status of a hired man, no longer in request at bridge and tennis parties. Two women let him down; another, the half-caste Heine Bates, is faithful to his memory. She is so faithful to the David she knew as a child that when she meets him again, after they have both been through a great deal and he has made money by (literal) gold-digging, she refuses to marry him. The war comes and once more they are carried apart. But, like Penelope, she knows how to wait.

Miss Rosemary Rees gives some amusing sketches, not untouched by malice and satire, of various aspects of social life in New Zealand, with special emphasis on the relations between the British and the Maoris—happy relations on the whole, in spite of Celia's unfounded contempt for Heine. Neither our interest nor our feelings are very strongly engaged; but "Penelope Waits" ripples pleasantly along, amid delightful scenery and people who, whatever their other failings, are neither bored nor depressed.

A Farm in East Anglia. "Well Fare the Plough" is not a novel but a log-book of the land. Miss Elizabeth Harland's farm, the Manor Farm, is at Silford, near Norwich; her diary begins on New Year's Day, 1944, and closes on New Year's Eve. It is concerned largely, though not exclusively, with farming; and the author does not try to make farm-work sound more romantic or sensational than it is. She follows in the wake of the Seasons and, like a plough, turns up whatever comes. The sense of emergency is already passing from the war; it is the epoch of occasional rockets, not of frequent air raids; already people are beginning to discuss what shall be done with the Germans.

Notwithstanding its diary-form, the book is not lacking in dialogue. Most of the "careless talk" is suppressed; there is a little politics, a lot of gossip, reminiscence and farming shop; and, needless to say, a great deal of Norfolk dialect; so much, indeed, that anyone who does not like it should avoid the book. But for anyone who enjoys it, as I do, it enhances the attraction of this very soothing, satisfying and sustaining chronicle. To find Miss Harland's gift for racy speech at its best, turn to Patfield's cynical but not unadmiring account of the old-world shepherd ("he looked a proper client in his old corduroy trousis") on page 263. She enjoyed a very happy relationship with her thirty-odd employees; they talked to her freely, as they thought and felt, and told her many things she did not know, including the meaning of Eureka ("Somebody stood on a bridge in Greece saying 'I done it.'"). She does not sentimentalise them in the slightest nor wrap them in the "cold comfort" of Miss Stella Gibbons; they are lifelike and likeable.

Farm-work is monotonous and cannot be profitably hurried, and the same may be said in praise, or criticism, of this book. It should be read slowly and lingeringly and in small doses. One page is very like another; the seasons merge into each other imperceptibly, and the expression "To-morrow is another day" suits the author's frame of mind. But she writes with distinction, she has a deep respect for human as well as for agricultural values, and her journal will rank high among latter-day Georgics.

Strong but not Smooth. Miss Eberhart does not share the tendency of some writers of detective stories to banish romance or grant it a grudging and perfunctory admittance. With her, the course of true love runs strongly, though by no means smoothly. The lovers have their golden moments, though these are perhaps less poignant than their black ones, when deadly peril lurks behind every door. Wings of fear bear Monica Blaine from New York to the sun-drenched streets of Mexico City, and although the discomforts of modern travel are familiar to almost everyone, only Miss Eberhart can invoke such an atmosphere of danger and horror as makes one shudder at the mere thought of boarding an aeroplane.

The Lure of Size. It is often said that industry needs men with big ideas, who have the foresight and imagination to deal in millions where others hesitate over hundreds. The villain in "Death at the Dam" must have been imbued with just such principles. The dam, naturally, was to be the largest in the world, and megalomania is notoriously infectious; but all the same, the two dozen or so corpses with which Mr. Adams strews his pages do in the end begin to pall. The colourful Mr. Rex McBride does all he can to keep things bright; but in spite of working overtime, he is only partially successful.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Then and Now. By W. Somerset Maugham. (*Heinemann; 10s. 6d.*)
Penelope Waits. By Rosemary Rees. (*Chapman and Hall; 8s. 6d.*)
Well Fare the Plough. By Elizabeth M. Harland. (*Cassell; 8s. 6d.*)
Wings of Fear. By Mignon G. Eberhart. (*Collins; 8s. 6d.*)
Death at the Dam. By Cleve F. Adams. (*Cassell; 8s. 6d.*)

Pin-up Girl:
No. 54. Lana Turner.

M.-G.-M. star LANA TURNER, *born in Wallace, Idaho, U.S.A., was christened Julia Jean Mildred Frances Turner. She is a blonde with grey-green eyes; is 5 ft. 3 ins. tall; weighs 110 lbs. She won her first screen rôle in 1937; early in her career was known as " the sweater girl." Lana has a remarkably fine figure; holds herself very erect. Her last film was " The Postman Always Rings Twice," and she is booked for " Coquette," which is shortly starting on production. From being a " very fine clothes-horse," Lana is developing technique and glamour with it.*

AKTÉ.*

By MERYON VANCE.

IN the house of Chrysis, on the island of Cos, the guests assembled one night asked for a story.

"What is the history of your clay Mercury, Chrysis? Some lover's gift?"

"No," she said.

"Friendship's, perhaps?"

"Friendship, yes, though I knew her only three days. I will tell you her story:

"A girl stepped from the shadows of a narrow entry into the grey Athenian dust, one moonlight night, as our troupe was returning from a performance. I saw at once, from the boyish suppleness of her limbs and their perfect proportion, an acrobat's body.

"'It is said you have a place in your troupe, Apollus,' she said boldly. Our Master's eye ran over her.

"'What can you do?' he said. To show him, she turned somersaults forward and back with a fine finish.

"'I can leap through the points better than Thirsis you lost yesterday,' she said.

"'As to that we shall see. I want no runaway slaves. What is your name and your master's?'

"'Akté, and I was born free. I was in Kios' Troupe, now disbanded.' We all knew the troupe had been dispersed through the foolishness of its master. He dabbled in politics.

"'Well,' said Apollus, 'I will give you a trial. In three days we perform at the house of Bordas. He is a patron and no mean judge. The performance must be perfect. You have three days.'

"'Yes, Master,' she said casually.

"'Take her, Chrysis, and see her fitted with a tunic and ready for rehearsal,' he said to me. She came and threw an arm round my shoulder.

"'Come, little owl, we are going to be friends. Why do you stare at me so?'

"'Why,' I stammered, 'you are so different—more like a boy than a girl; like the young gods in the plays.'

"Indeed, I had seen nothing like her—her bronze, crisp curls, her straight blue eyes and boyish limbs.

"'I am no Athenian. I come from Delos. Where do you come from, child?'

"'Cos,' I said. 'Listen, Akté. Can you do the sword trick easily? If not, slip away at the next corner. Apollus is a hard man. He has taken you because he is in a fix and will keep you to it. Bordas, too—his patron—is interfering and a bully, often demanding a trick repeated many times, and taking part himself.'

"'Pooh! I know it all, inside out, and can do it.'

"Well, she could do it. I found at rehearsal she was all she promised. And in her short, spangled tunic and wreath, more like a boy than ever. Apollus was rubbing his hands at having found so good a substitute. The next night we performed at a house near the Dyplion Gate, and the guests showered her with coins and roses.

"'Do not flatter yourself, Akté, over to-night's performance. Bordas is a keener judge. To-morrow we take the leap.'

"'The old fool!' said Akté to me. 'As though I were not as keen to catch the eye of Bordas as he.'

"'Why, do you know him?' I asked.

"'Every twist of his mind. He was the friend of my lover.'

"'It seems to me you are going a roundabout way to see him again,' I said.

"'How little you know! Can I share your room for the night?'

"'I was thinking you might. Lodgings are crowded. Besides, then we can talk,' I said.

"'It is best not to talk in theatrical lodgings, I have found. Not till one has accomplished something.'

"Apollus worked us hard at rehearsal, for Bordas, an athlete himself, was critical, but the fees at his house were larger than at any other in Athens. He could be generous, too, though tiresome. Often insisting on altering the turns, or taking part in them himself in a way most trying to the performers. Akté said she knew all this.

"On the night of the performance we set out, each carrying some of the properties. Akté carried the swords. The symposium had been on for some time when our turn came and we entered the hall. I remember well the first glare of the lights after the dimness of the passages. The shadows of the guests moved and flickered on the walls behind them, as they sat on their couches drinking. Some seemed to take the shape of animals, as if Circe herself were at work. The shadow of Bordas, his wreath askew, was like a bull with horns.

"'Why, Akté!' he cried. 'My bronze girl, what brings you here? The girl has talent,' he said to the guests. 'She was in old Kios' Troupe.'

"She dropped on one knee and raised an arm, saluting him, then threw him a rose. We took our places on the great patterned floor, I marking mine on a mosaic dolphin's back, and the lute and flute girls began. Until my turns were over I could see nothing. Ours is a skilled calling: a fault in timing, a slip in catching, and one may be crippled for life. When I had finished, Bordas was on his feet, moving about among his guests, a little unsteadily but in a good humour. He directed the circle of swords to be placed near him.

"'Give the girl room, my lord,' said Apollus.

"Bordas stepped back, jostling Akté. She fell against the cup-bearer, but righted herself immediately. The mishap made me anxious for her, but she saluted and somersaulted lightly into the circle of swords and out again. The guests applauded. She did it again, and this time Apollus caught her. Bordas shouted, 'Again, Akté! To me!' I saw beads of moisture on her forehead, but she smiled, took off again and landed perfectly in the circle head-foremost, then somersaulted out to him. It was so quick I failed to see exactly what happened, but he must have mishandled the catch. They came down together, Akté on top, and he brought part of the circle of swords down with him, gashing his shoulder. Blood ran down his arm as he rose, and the guests crowded round him, but he laughed.

"'A scratch, a mere flesh wound,' he said. Apollus dressed it, profuse with apologies for the girl's clumsiness. Akté was unhurt. She was breathless and panting. I had never seen a face so strained. I was relieved when the guests called for dancing. Bordas' good humour remained with him to the end of our performance, so all was well. As we walked home through the silent streets, not one of us but felt a burden lifted. Had the accident proved fatal, we might now be in prison.

"When we reached our lodging Akté was missing.

"'I thought so,' said Apollus. 'The foolish girl is scared and has run off. There was no need—it was a flesh wound, and he took it well. I dressed it myself. When did you last see her, Chrysis?'

"'She was cleaning the swords,' I said. 'Before we started she asked me to carry them. She said she was tired. Indeed, Sir, she was very upset.'

"'Upset? No artist can afford to be upset,' said Apollus. He jingled his purse and told us to make a good supper and get to bed. The cooks had loaded us with delicacies at the house. Perhaps that was why I dreamt that night.

"I dreamt I was at home in Cos, lying on the grass of the cliffs, and the autumn rain fell softly pattering on my face. Then I awoke and found rose-petals falling softly on me. They came from the little window, high up in the wall. I stood on the bed on tiptoe and put my hand up to the window and touched hers.

"'Little owl,' she whispered, 'I am in the street outside. Listen. Fetch the fish for breakfast early to-morrow morning, by the Potters' Street, and without fail bring your purse. All you have.'

"'Yes, Akté. But wait, wait!' I whispered. She had gone.

"Passing down the narrow street of the Potters at dawn, a hand pulled my cloak and drew me to an entry. Akté embraced me. Then opening a door, she pushed me into a potter's yard full of clay figurines.

"'Here we can eat and talk,' she said. 'Eat, little owl. You will need it for your journey. Here we must say good-bye.'

"She laid out food on the bench and herself began to eat.

"'Akté,' I said, 'there is no need for flight. It was only a flesh wound. Apollus says so himself. He is not angry.'

"'Little innocent,' she said, 'all the swords were poisoned—I saw to it myself. Bordas has already sickened. I cleaned the swords. None the less, suspicion will fall on the troupe. I have risked much to save you.'

"'How you must hate him!' I said.

"'Without measure,' she answered. 'He killed my lover, he and his bullies did, the night he betrayed my friends at a feast in his house. Listen! Go straight to the Piræus. There is a ship in sailing for Cos to-day. You have your purse. Now hasten, little owl, before the hue and cry is up. Let me embrace you.'

"'Akté! And you?'

"'I, too, must go. It is best you know nothing of me. Perhaps we shall meet again, perhaps not. Somehow I will let you have a sign that I am safe. I have yet much to do. Let us give each other one of the potter's figurines for a keepsake.'

"I chose this Mercury, for it was like her. She chose a dancer.

"'She has your poise, and see how the old potter has painted her great black eyes, like yours, little owl.' We left the money on the potter's bench. She slipped into the shadows and was gone."

"Did you not see her again, Chrysis?" asked the guests.

"Yes, once again, far away but perfectly clear. Our ship put in at Delos for a time. Coming out on a favourable wind, we passed a merchantman bound for the Bosphorus, so I learnt from two merchants discussing her near me.

"'Delos,' said one, 'makes me think, alas! of the conspiracy of Kios. They were mostly Delos men.'

"'Ah!' said the other. 'I never knew. What happened?'

"'One of the conspirators called Bordas betrayed them. They were surprised and taken at a feast in his house. A troupe of acrobats I knew were performing there.'

"'Vengeance take all traitors,' said the other.

"The vessel was now so near I could clearly see the sailors working. As I watched them, a little figure ran out on the high, curved stern, balancing as only an acrobat could, and took the pose of this little Mercury, messenger of the gods. It was Akté—she had seen and recognised my ship, so I knew that she was safe." [THE END.

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

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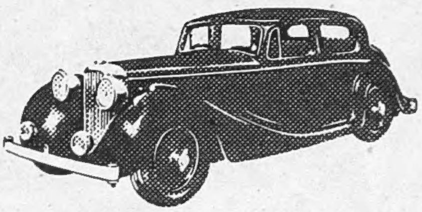

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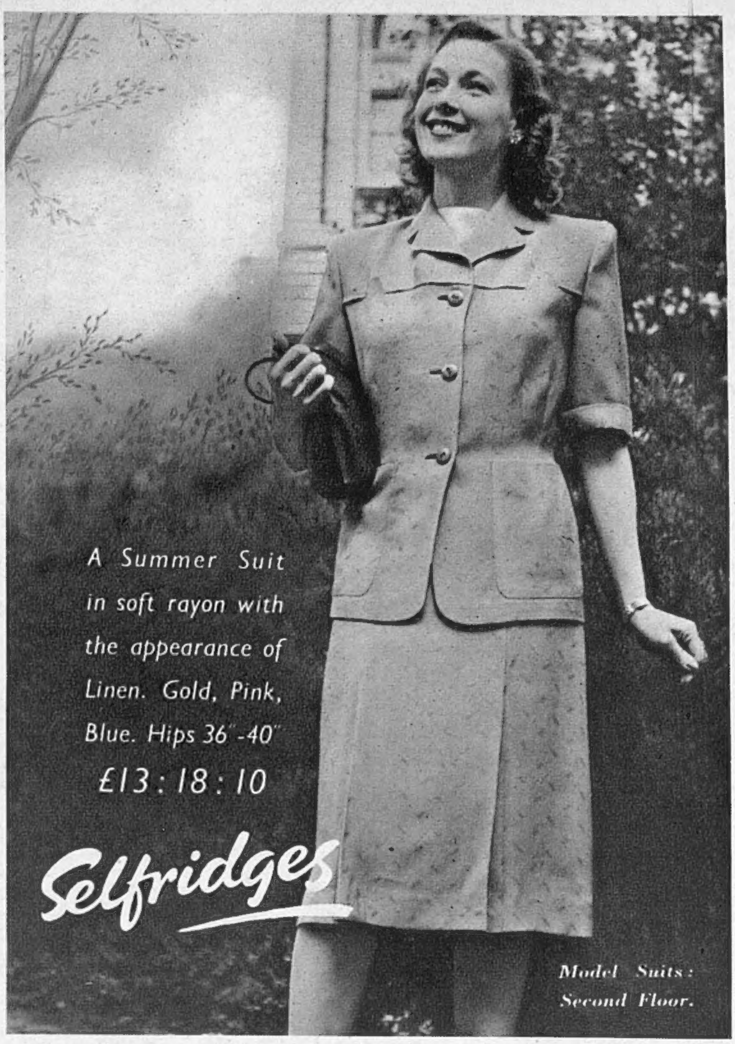

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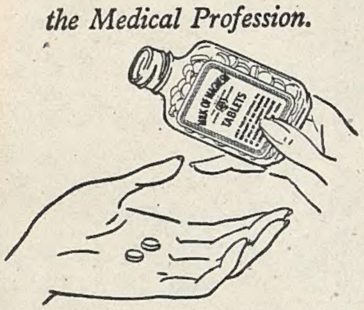

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